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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

OCI #0706/68
18 April 1968

Smrkovsky Elected Chairman of Czechoslovak National Assembly

Josef Smrkovsky, one of the leading proponents of reform in Czechoslovakia, was elected chairman of the National Assembly (parliament) on 18 April. In a secret ballot, 188 deputies voted in favor and 68 against Smrkovsky, according to CTK. [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: The 68 votes cast against Smrkovsky reflect the fact that conservatives within the party are fighting to head off further changes in the balance of power within the party and Czechoslovakia in general. [REDACTED]

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Emigration of Polish Jews Increases

Jewish emigration from Poland has reached a level of about 100 a month, according to "informed sources" quoted by UPI in Warsaw. The increasing outflow follows party boss Gomulka's 19 March renewal of his offer to allow Jews to leave the country if they felt greater allegiance to Israel. He first hinted that they should do so after the Arab-Israeli conflict last June, when many of them expressed open sympathy for the Israeli cause. [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: [REDACTED] the Netherlands Embassy in Warsaw, which handles Israeli interests in Poland, about 600 Jews have left Poland since last fall. The Dutch have indicated that while there is no great increase in visa applications for Israel, more applicants seem to be receiving passports and exit permits. The Dutch also believe, however, that the total number of Polish Jews who will take advantage of Gomulka's offer probably will be relatively small. Most of Poland's 30,000 Jews are elderly and have no desire to leave, while those influential in the party and state apparatus--many of whom are now being purged--are unlikely to be allowed to leave. [REDACTED]

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Reported Cooling of Chinese-Albanian Relations

Albanian-Chinese relations outwardly appear solid, but there are indications that Tirana's friendship for Peking peaked in early 1967, and has since cooled off. [REDACTED]

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COMMENT:

some Albanians have lost their admiration for their Chinese allies but there is no evidence that Tirana is considering changing its basic Chinese orientation.

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No Polish Visa for New York Times' Tad Szulc

Tad Szulc, NYT correspondent slated to replace incumbent Jonathan Randal in Warsaw, has been refused a visa. The Polish foreign ministry official who telephoned the US Embassy in Warsaw with this information said he could give no reasons for the refusal.

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COMMENT: Ever since Szulc applied for a Polish visa over a month ago there had been indications that he would not get it. Although there is no past history of bad blood between Szulc and the Polish regime, the fact that he is Jewish and speaks Polish probably figured prominently in the Polish decision.

Randal has been doing a very good job of reporting on the current political crisis in Poland, and evidently has good sources. If he leaves as scheduled within the next four to six weeks, the regime's gain will be a loss for western readers.

Some Moravians Want the Same Autonomy as the Slovaks

Anticipating constitutional changes which will federalize the Czechoslovak republic and grant Slovakia equal governmental status with the Czech lands, the deputies of the South Moravian Region National Committee yesterday resolved to demand equal treatment for Moravia. The resolution was addressed to the National Assembly and the President. If the North Moravian Region should join in, there is a possibility that under a new constitution, the target date for which is

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[REDACTED]

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1970, Czechoslovakia will be composed of three states, Bohemia, 25X1
Moravia, and Slovakia with equal powers in domestic matters,
and with Prague retaining control over foreign policy,
security, and defense. [REDACTED]

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NOTE: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT
ONLY THE ANALYSIS OF THE EE DIVISION

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